

# **Natural Movement**

## **An Elementary School Lesson Plan for Drama with Special Education Populations**

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Lesson Plan

**Lesson Name: Natural Movement**

**Goal:**

- 1) to get students to work together and understand how communities work
- 2) to have students understand their role in their own communities and that they each have something to contribute
- 3) to learn about nature and how natural communities work

**Objective:**

- 1) students will learn and produce the sounds of rain
- 2) students will use their bodies to form a natural community
- 3) students will use their imaginations to explore the natural world
- 4) students will work together cooperatively
- 5) students will use their bodies and voices to portray a visual image of something in nature

**Class type:** LD    **Grade level:** 3<sup>rd</sup>    **Functioning level:** 3<sup>rd</sup>    **Age:** 9/10

**Instructional Outline:**

**Introduction:**

- a. Have group make a circle, then introduce self
- b. Say, "We're going to talk about nature today. Who can tell me something about nature?" (call on students to answer)
- c. "Before we jump into action, I want to learn your names." Have students stand up in small groups. Then pass a ball around and have students say their name and an activity they like to do. You start. Next, have them say their name and a motion for that activity. Again, artist provides example.
- d. Have the class say their names again, and instruct them to sit down one by one after they say their name. You sit down last.

**Question and Answer:**

- a. "You all do so many different things. It is great to see such an active class. Now let's think about some of the things we do outside."
- b. What do you do when it's sunny out?
- c. What do you do when it's rainy out?
- d. What do you do when it's cold out?
- e. What do you do when it's windy?

Some of these scenarios can be acted out with volunteers from the group. Examples: Have one person be the rain and one person getting rained on. Have one person be the wind and the other person walking against it.

f. What do you think was happening? (call on kids for responses) How did we know it was raining/windy/etc.? How did the person feel walking in the rain/against the wind? How do we know?

**Classroom Management Strategy:**

- a. "We're going to play some games. There are only two things to remember. The first is, if I clap my hands in a pattern (give an example), you're going to stop what you're doing and repeat the claps back to me. Let's practice." Artist claps hands in a simple pattern and the class repeats.
- b. "The second thing to remember is the word 'freeze.' It means stop doing whatever you're doing and look up at me." Give an example. Then ask the class to practice. Have them wiggle their fingers or wave their arms, then say, "Freeze!"
- c. Stand students up in groups. Tell them you're going to practice the two things they just learned. Remind them to share the space because everyone deserves room to move. Have the students move around the room. Practice clapping and freezing. When they're ready, move on.

**Warm-up Activity:**

- a. "Let's come back to a circle. Think of one thing in nature you saw when you came to school today. Keep it to yourself." Give students some time to think.
- b. "We'll go around the circle and you'll stand up one at a time and pretend to be the thing you saw." After some thinking time, you can do an example first if you have no volunteers. (if you're still unsure of names, you can have the students say their name before they "become" their object) Have the class guess what each object is. Allow 3-4 guesses before the actor reveals what they are pretending to be. You can use "freeze" here if your actor is being too active!

**Prep Activity:**

- a. "There are so many parts to nature. Can you name some?" Call on students.
- b. "There are so many sounds in nature. Let's make some now. We're going to make it rain right here in this classroom." Play the rain game.
  - i. Stand in center of circle. Have students mimic your motions and sounds. Tell them that when you stand in front of them, they can start doing what you're doing and continue to do it until you change it. Move in a circle so the sound rises and falls. Begin by rubbing your palms together.

- ii. Next, snap.
- iii. Next, stomp your feet.
- iv. Next, make crashing noises and stomp feet.
- v. Stomp feet.
- vi. Snap.
- vii. Rub palms together.
- viii. Silence. Sit the students down.
- c. “What did that sound like?” “How did that feel?”

### **Main Activity:**

- a. “I’m going to put some pictures in the circle. Listen to me before you take one.” Have pictures of natural objects (and duplicates) that you put in the circle from a particular place (a country, continent, or geographic area. It is good if you can find out what the students have already studied to keep the lesson familiar)
- b. “I’m going to go on a trip to \_\_\_\_ (the place) \_\_\_\_\_. You all are going to pretend to be something from there. Some will be from the land, some from the sky, and some from the water. There can be more than one of each thing. Why do you think there can be more than one?” Solicit responses.
- c. “Look at the pictures carefully. Think about two or three things you might want to be.” Have students choose a picture one at a time and return to the circle. When every student has a picture, pick up the remaining photos and stand the students up.
- d. “We’ll make \_\_\_\_ (the place) \_\_\_\_ over here.” Designate a spot. Call on the students one at a time to add themselves to the place. Encourage them to act out their picture silently. Freeze. Have students think of a sound related to the picture. Let the students move and say their sounds. Freeze.
- e. Have students meet two other characters in \_\_\_\_ (the place) \_\_\_\_\_. Have them ask what they are, the sound they make, and how they think they help others in \_\_\_\_ (the place) \_\_\_\_\_. Freeze.
- f. Have students watch their classmates. Unfreeze and refreeze small groups at a time. Say, “We’re going to move around \_\_\_\_ (the place) \_\_\_\_ one last time. When I start to count down from ten, \_\_\_\_ (the place) \_\_\_\_ will go to sleep. You’ll get quieter and quieter and slower and slower until you’re seated in a circle when I reach zero.” Unfreeze the whole class one last time. Count down.
- g. When the class is seated, perform a clap and repeat to get all eyes on you.
- h. Have them each make one sound to describe your feeling, go around room quickly. Have them move again, making their sounds. Freeze. Have them use one word to describe their feeling.

### **Question and Answer:**

- a. Have people hold up their pictures and encourage students to look around the circle.

- b. “Think about what your favorite part was.” Encourage the kids to share. “In one word, how did this activity make you feel?” Share around the circle.
- c. “What do you think would happen if there was no (call out a few pictures)?” Sharing. “How did you help this \_\_\_\_ (the place) \_\_\_\_?” Share.
- d. “Just like things in nature work together, you have to work together in your classroom. How do you think you can help your school community?” Share.

**Closure:**

“You all did a great job creating a natural community in \_\_\_\_ (the place) \_\_\_\_\_. Now let’s keep up a great classroom community. How do you think you can help your teacher?” Share. “Give yourselves a pat on the back for your hard work and thinking today. Now it’s time to work hard and think for your teacher.”

**Follow-up Assignments:**

- a. draw a picture of yourself as this natural object working with another (what job/role you play)
- b. listen to sounds of nature and see if you can guess what they are
- c. create a nature web of pictures to see how everything is connected
- d. keep a journal of the natural things you see (can be a picture journal)
- e. keep a weather journal (kids can also write what they had to wear/do/not do because of the weather)

**Additional Information:**

**Materials needed:**

- a ball to pass around during the name game
- pictures of natural things (more than enough for one per student)

**Assessment and Reflections (correlate numerically with objectives):**

- 1) if students can watch and mimic me when “making rain”
- 2) through conversing about how they contribute to their own community, I will be able to see if students made a connection between the activity and the goal
- 3) I will be able to literally see if students are able to transform images to action
- 4) if I see students talking to each other during the interactive portion of the main activity, I know they are building community
- 5) see #3

**Lesson Extenders:**

- choose favorite animal/thing from sky/body of water and then act it out
- everyone act out what they think is the strongest animal, weakest animal
- animal yoga
- turn the entire class into animal (build the animal- everyone is a piece)
- make a sky

**Potential Challenges:**

- 1) Making the connection between a natural community and a classroom community
- 2) Frustration/anger when another child chose the picture someone else wanted
- 3) Not being able to reproduce the image kinesthetically
- 4) Noises might be triggers or cause a disruption
- 5) Not everyone may be comfortable sharing his or her experience

I chose this activity because I am very attracted to nature and have noticed that most kids are, too. This activity's very "nature" is an automatic draw-in for most. This activity can also allow for artist-teacher collaboration, as it can build off of a natural landscape or country the class has previously studied. It can also serve as an introduction to a place they may study if the artist and teacher have a chance to discuss the activity beforehand.

The warm-up activity gets the kids moving and establishes a supportive environment. The main activity gets kids to transform a picture into something three-dimensional and alive, in their own creative way. Kids have to use their sense of space, movement, and voice. The wrap-up activity allows kids to reflect not only about how things in nature work together, but their own place in nature and their community. All activities are cooperative and non-competitive. I chose this activity because not only does it allow kids to explore themselves as individuals, it allows them to see their contribution to the classroom community.